1: Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1936 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

CHAPTER VIII.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT IN THE HADHRAMAUT.

Roads and Road Transport.

Despite the fact that of late years the motor-car has become a familiar object in parts of the Hadhramaut, the camel and the ass are still the principal means of conveyance for man and goods in the country, and although the tracks suitable for cars are certain to be increased, the bulk of the interior trade will continue to be carried in the traditional Arabian fashion. Increase of motor tracks will, in fact, probably mean increased earnings to caravan men, as there will be more goods to distribute over short carries off the main routes.

The principal caravan routes are :—

Mukalla (donkey route)—Tila—Zemen as Saghir—Hisi—Dahma—Jol Ubeid—Wadi Du'an—Sif—Hajarein—Meshhed—Haura—Hauta (Al Qatn)—Shibam.

Mukalla (camel route)—Rashnid—Haj Bal Qabrein—Kheila—Wadi Du'an—Sif—Hajarein—Meshhed—Haura—Hauta (Al Qatn)—Shibam.

Mukalla—Gheil Ba Wazir—Sufeila—Nihār—Sāh—Shibam—Seiyun.

Mukalla—Harshiat — Tokhm — Bagha — Jirwit—Batha—Marsa Mukalla—'Umn Ainein—Bawerqat—Haura—Hauta—Shibam—Seiyun—Seheil Qibli—Tarim—'Einat.

Mukalla—Fuwwa—Kherba—Bahth—Yuwan.

Mukalla—Fuwwa—Kherba—Bahth—Kanina—Sidara.

Shihr—Gheil Ba Wazir—Ma'di—Reida—Had al Jabir—Herū—Mesenda—Tarim—Maseilat as Silma—Qahir—'Einat.

Shihr—Gheil Ba Wazir—Ma'di—Reida—Had al Jabir—Herū—Mesenda—Tarim—Seiyun.

Shihr—Ras 'Aqabat al 'Arsha—'Abul—'Ais—Gheil bin Yamīn—Herū—Wadi Na'r—Husn bin Dhoban—Tarim.

Seihut (camels only)—Al 'Ais—Semarma—Al Gheil—Buzūn—Teheir—Maqrat—Al Qoz—Bin Qora—Morheih—Hanun—Bin Sheikh Nān—Hamir—Tabūrkum—Sena—'Qabr Hud—Fughma—As Som—Qasm—'Einat—Tarim.

Shibam—Husn al 'Abr—Nejran—San'a.

Shibam—Shabwa—San'a.

Shibam—Yab'uth—San'a.

There are also caravans to and from Merkha, Hadhina, Joba, Beihan, and Harib.

Caravans from Mukalla reach Du'an in about six days, and from Shihr and Mukalla arrive at the principal towns of the Wadi Hadhramaut in up to ten days. Caravans from Mukalla to Hajr take three days. Caravans travelling between Shibam and San'ā take fourteen or fifteen days over the journey with loaded camels.

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HOUSE BUILDING IN THE HADHRAMAUT

W. H. INGRAMS

342 361 363 DURING a recent tour in the Hadhramaut my wife and I collected some notes on the building of houses. Each town in the country has its own individual characteristics. Although the houses of coastal towns are all of the familiar Arab type, built of stone rubble and whitewashed, there is a wide difference in the aspect of the towns themselves. Makalla, for example, is a miniature edition of Zanzibar—tall houses and narrow streets, sometimes not 6 feet across, while Shihr is a town of lower houses, wide streets, and open spaces.

361 342 353 In the Wadi Do'an the tall mud-built houses climb up the banks of the wadi. They are close packed, but it is in their interiors that they merit attention. The colour scheme is black and white and rusty red. Although there is practically no whitewash on the outside of Do'an houses the interiors of the better-class dwellings are spotlessly white. The ceilings of the rooms, which are lofty, are supported by carved pillars of *'elb* [1] wood, and all interior woodwork is of this material. The doors are set in wide heavily carved frames and the whole ornamented extensively with iron nails, 2 inches across the heads, burnished with lead, which shine like polished dollars. It is a modern development of Do'an houses that every room in the house should be provided with its own ablution room, and as a consequence they are really self-contained flats. The entrance door gives on to a passage into the flat, and there is usually not a door into the main living room but a Moorish arch either in the whitewashed wall or of stained *'elb* wood again studded with burnished nails. The ceiling is held up on rafters of *'elb* wood supported by the pillars previously referred to, the mud floor of the next storey above being laid over slats of date wood very attractively arranged in herring-bone pattern.

361 342 177 352 492 493 In Terim the principal feature is the large number of enormous dwelling-houses in a style copied from Malaya but built of mud bricks. The exterior of these houses is decorated with blue, green, yellow, and pink, which is not at all unattractive. Interiors are fitted with every up-to-date contrivance, electric light and fans, telephones, ice plants, and modern European conveniences in the bathrooms. Whereas in Do'an and Shibam there is scarcely a chair to be found these houses are replete with European furniture, albeit some of a rather florid style. Living in such houses as these one is struck at every moment with the reflection that there is hardly a thing in the house that has not had to be transported on camel back over the mountains for six days, and while I mention this it is worth recording that there are sixty cars in Terim itself, each of which has been transported in parts by twelve camels from the coast.

313 333 353 The principal structural detail that the wealthy Seyyids of Terim and Seyyun have to contend with in their building operations is the difficulty of getting long enough timber. The *'elb* or *sidr* tree trows to no great height, and although we found *'ariata* trees growing to 50 feet or more in height some days' journey down the Wadi Maseilah, they cannot be transported by

[1] The commoner Arabic name is *sidr*, *Rhamnus nabeca*.

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1933. In these last eighteen months however, and particularly during the last winter, the number of visitors, official and otherwise, runs into over one hundred, in fact, into several hundreds if naval visitors and tourists on the coast are included, for Mukalla has recently had the fresh experience of seeing bus loads of tourists from steamers driving through its street.

The more frequent and more intensive incursion of European visitors is of course in itself a great contrast with the recent past, but I think that the contrast which most strikes visitors who have returned to the country in the past year is the comparatively peaceful conditions which now prevail. Little more than a year ago every Badawin and tribesman in the country carried his rifle with him, even to walk across the street. Blood feuds were widespread, and even harmless travellers of the unarmed classes were at times likely to lose not only their property but their lives. Travellers by motor car had to take with them an escort when passing from village to village. In places there were extensive systems of trenches to pass from the villages to the fields, and I know of people who have spent as much as twenty years without getting beyond their own doors.

Now however all this has passed and it is comparatively rarely that you see a tribesman carrying a rifle, indeed many of them do not even carry the *jambiyas* or curved daggers which are almost as much a part of their dress as a walking-stick was of ours. How all this has come to pass is more a matter of the history of the Hadhramaut than its geography, but I should simply like to say that it was largely through the will of the people who have a genuine desire for peace and for the following of peaceful pursuits.

This new peace has resulted in a much greater contact between tribes and between different parts of the country and has made possible a great extension in communications. Eighteen months ago there were about half a dozen motors on the coast and about sixty in the interior, carried up by camels. By the completion of the Al Kaf road Tarim has been linked with Shihr and passenger-carrying lorries ply almost daily between the coast and the interior. When I left the country a couple of months ago there were at least two hundred motor vehicles in it and every ship was bringing one or two. Many more car tracks have been made and cars now go to almost all parts of the Hadhramaut, westwards to Al 'Abr and eastwards to As Sōm as well as up or down branch wadis. The Mukalla Government is also constructing another remarkably good motor road to the Hadhramaut which is being built northwards from Mukalla and southwards from Du'an. Something over 20 miles of the former and 10 of the latter had been completed when I left; about 60 miles remains to be done, of which the greater part is over the flat *jols* and offers no particular difficulties of construction. Starting from Mukalla you can now motor at least 300 miles in the Hadhramaut without recrossing your tracks, and there are over 500 miles of tracks altogether.

The possibilities of air transport have also been greatly improved. There were, eighteen months ago, eight landing-grounds in the five Sultanates in the eastern part of the Protectorate of which only three, Mukalla, Shibam, and Qishn, were used at all frequently. New landing-grounds have been constructed at Tarim, Seiyun, Hureidha, Al 'Abr, 'Azzan, Balhaf, Risib,

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4. A WONDERFUL RECEPTION IN THE GARDEN CITY SEḤĒL SHIBĀM.

491 The families of Āl Ṭuwēy and Laᶜdjam are on the best of
493 friendly terms with the Sultan and arrange matters with him. A little later the great dark-red cars buzz through the gate and cross the *sēl*-bed in the direction of the palm-groves, called Seḥēl Shibām. Only in the last few years has the motor-car penetrated as far as Ḥaḍramaut. Sayyid Abū Bakr el-Kāf of Terīm has made this possible by the construction of motor roads. Motor-cars can, with great difficulty, be brought from the port of esh-Shiḥr to Terīm. The separate parts of the cars have to be transported on camels for a great part of the way.

562 From the road one can see very little of the palm-groves
529 and the summer pavilions in their midst; high mud walls shut
575 off the gardens from the gaze of passers-by. There is one exception to this, where the central point is formed by a new building in modern style. This is the club of the young men of Shibām; no women come here and so there is nothing to shut
312 off. A little further on the cars turn into the gateway that
342 gives entrance to the garden of the Āl Ṭuwēy and Laᶜdjam.
177 This summer abode of their joint families is still uninhabited;
351 the time for moving from town to country has only just come. There is a well behind the house, from which oxen and donkeys draw up the water, clear as crystal, though tasting somewhat bitter. All around there are banana and papaya trees, pomegranate and lemon bushes as well as date-palms. The new summer pavilion is in the depths of the garden; our host has devoted his leisure to building it. It is a product of Ḥaḍramī imagination influenced by Singapore and Java. For the outer walls chaste, simple white has been abandoned and is replaced by soft green, rose and sky-blue. The great windows are framed by coloured ornamentation. Connected with the villa is a swimming-bath with a high parapet. One has a great longing for colour in this sunny land, where it is so lacking, and this fairy palace strikes a happy note among

CHAPTER X.

TO TERÎM, THE HOPE OF ALL ḤADRAMAUT.

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In the Qeᶜēṭī country, already, we heard the name of Sayyid Abū Bakr el-Kāf invariably pronounced with respect, and here we have entered the land of his activity. Sayyid el-Kāf has placed his energy, his love, and all his possessions at the service of his country and of his people. His example is an impressive call to unity and to the setting aside of personal interests and susceptibilities for the general good. Schools, endowed and maintained by him, are scattered all over the country. The Qeᶜēṭī Sultans and Governors have them in their residences, and the influence of these little schools will slowly penetrate through the whole land. His other sensational enterprise, which may become of the greatest significance for the country's future, is the construction of a motor road from the Ḥaḍramaut valley to the coast. Although the road is not yet completed, its influence is already making itself felt. The most difficult *ᶜaqabas* have been conquered so that it is possible to bring cars into the valley of Ḥaḍramaut, though the transport of these is still expensive. There, where the first car passes, others will soon follow, and in a country where travelling is very tiring and very slow, the motor-car will be particularly appreciated. The Ḥaḍramīs who have been successful abroad do not lack money. The motor-car having arrived will not disappear again, and conditions within the borders of Ḥaḍramaut will be entirely changed thereby. The construction of roads in the valley itself has been started without delay, and drivers and mechanics have already found their way there.

721 The inconvenience of intertribal warfare makes itself felt more and more forcibly, but Sayyid Abū Bakr will be greatly

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helped by the motor-car in his great work of pacifying and opening up Ḥaḍramaut.

We depart in two fine cars belonging to the Sultan of Sēwūn for Terīm, the city to which Leo Hirsch has preceded us and from which nearly forty years ago the sayyids with their fanaticism and hatred of Christianity forced him to flee within a few hours of his arrival. An Englishman, Mr. Boscawen, reached there also a full year in advance of us, but he did not publish a description of his journey and, according to report, only came for sport. Aeroplanes of the R. A. F. at Aden, with Colonels Cochrane and Lake and Flight-Lieutenant Rickards on board, also once flew high above the town, but they were only making an aerial reconnaissance, although the scouts the[illegible]s felt a growing desire within them to set foot for once in this wonderful town. The Ḥaḍramīs say of it: "Terīm — and then thou desirest nothing else."

The cars take us through winding mud lanes between palm-groves to the hilly stretch of sand and loam outside the town. The palm-trees are planted well apart from each other in the sand; the fields of *dhura* come to an end but the little dykes of the area that can only be cultivated when the rains are sufficient are to be seen for long afterwards. Quite soon we pass the ruins of a town, Maryama, probably of great antiquity. The castle and the town were laid waste in a local war, and, of the cultivation of the land, only the little dykes, which divided the fields into squares, still remain. Close to Maryama there was an old road which crossed southwards over the mountain-wall. My companion climbed this *ʿaqaba* called Duqm el-Aswad and found on the rock-wall close to the *djōl* scrollings and grafitti probably made, many centuries ago, by the Bedouins of passing caravans. Some distance further on the villages and palm-groves at the foot of the southern mountain-wall come to an end. The loam vanishes under an ever thicker layer of sand and sand-dunes, and the cars stall several times. In accordance with the instructions of the Sultan we do not go by the normal way, through the plain, to Terīm, but follow

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493 the mountain road made by Sayyid el-Kāf. Some years ago,
491 when the motor-car was first introduced into Ḥaḍramaut, Terīm was at war with villages in the wādī, and this stretch across the plains was then, consequently, impassable. But Sayyid el-Kāf would not yield to any war whatever and, at great expense and effort, he made a road over the two rocky spurs which separate Terīm from Sēwūn.

491 The Sultan of Sēwūn was so proud of this piece of Ḥaḍramī engineering that he insisted on our following this route. It is very difficult for the drivers to cross the wādī at this point, to avoid hillocks and pitfalls, and to come out finally onto the beginning of the zigzag mountain road at the base of the rock. The road, narrow and very steep, goes up and up against the slopes of rock débris, and only short cars can manoeuvre the sharp corners. Half way up, the engines have to cool off and the drivers take a breathing-space, while we too need to recover from the tension! Descent on the other side of the steep ridge seems to be even more difficult than the ascent. Our drivers have to depend only on the brakes and do not seem able to lessen speed by letting the motor run on the lowest gear without giving gas. They do not trust our suggestions, and the brakes get hot so quickly that they have to be cooled with the water that we have brought with us in skins. The second spur of rock too is conquered without mishap; however, I preferred to make the descent on foot. It was indeed in this case quicker than in a car the brake-bands of which catch fire.

1. "TERĪM — AND THEN THOU DESIREST NOTHING ELSE".

361 We get the first view of Terīm from the second rocky ridge.
342 It lies in an absolutely barren stony plain. The cultivated tract of land is narrower than at Sēwūn and does not look so luxuriant and fertile, but the great number of large, square palaces is at once noticeable. They are not grey and white here as in Sēwūn, but of all manner of striking colours. One of

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always has to be on one's guard against treachery. In answer to my question whether he likes being here, he replies that he does not. Separated as he is from wife and children in Java, he is only here to defend his family's honour and position, and as soon as he can be spared he will return to his mother-land.

The master of the house himself conducts us to a place where Ḥimyaritic characters have been scratched on a rock and where are also as many as five long, though fairly narrow, basins beside the path. They were, of course, dry for the time being, but appear to be quite serviceable, and were plastered on the inside with a kind of mortar.

4. THE TOWN OF ʿAMD, DIFFICULT DISCUSSIONS AND HARD DECEPTIONS.

The way continues for the greater part over the boulders in the *sēl*-bed, which evoke many a groan from our camels. The beasts are weary from the long march in the hot wādī, yet we are ready to stake everything on the attempt to reach ʿAmd before the day ends so that, in the evening, negotiations for our further journey may be started, and then perhaps we may have the luck to get off again after no more than a day's delay. To our pleasant surprise, the great man of Wādī ʿAmd, Shēkh ʿAwaḍ bin Saʿūd bin Shamlān el-Djaʿdī, overtakes us on our way. He is a tough greybeard, who is still lithe enough to mount onto his camel's back while it is standing. His greeting is friendly and he insists on my mounting his camel. The Shēkh's right hand, Sālim bin Sallūm el-Djaʿdī, a very loquacious man with a heart-rending voice, sits behind me. We go on at a trot. As we approach ʿAmd the date plantations grow thicker. It is already dark when we pass the big village of Ḥebeb. Our caravan has got somewhat separated through my riding-companion's insistence on keeping our racing camel perpetually at the trot. I am carried along helplessly and in the darkness it is quite an art to keep my seat

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1930-1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

493 in the saddle, for t[illegible] sees obstacles on the ground, which escape my sea[illegible]ye, so that unexpected swerves are the result. It is a fantastic and most exhausting ride, which only comes to an end when, close to the little town of ʿAmd, we reach the house in which we are to be lodged. The rest of the caravan arrives after us in dribblets, and before long we are sitting together on the spacious roof of our guest-house, onto which crowds of inquisitive folk are flocking.

511 167 191 186 Nowhere, so far, had so much Malay been spoken and nowhere was conversation so frank and open. ʿAmd appears to be a town on the decline and very poor and to suffer much from protracted warfare. This condition of things leads the young men to seek their fortunes out of the country, Java attracting the bulk of them. The consequence is that a great many wives and children remain behind in poverty. The number of boys who are sent from Java to be brought up in ʿAmd is relatively large. They can be distinguished at once from among their dirty little comrades by their better dress and greater cleanliness. They form a part of our visitors that night and begin with great boldness to talk in Malay, to show off their knowledge. These youngsters look upon their sojourn in ʿAmd as a real period of exile and pine for Java.

000 The discussions over plans for our further journey were disappointing. It was considered to be out of the question for us to go to Niṣāb, but they could certainly bring us to the coast towns of Bal-Ḥāf or Bīr ʿAlī. Everyone deserted us at this point, even our own Sayyid ʿAlī el-ʿAṭṭās, but we held on to Niṣāb. Before we retired to a roof-terrace higher up, we had Sayyid Abū Bakr el-Kāf's letter of introduction and those from the Sultans of Sēwūn and Shibām read aloud, which made a noticeable impression. I added thereto that we were determined to go to Niṣāb and that we wished to leave on the morrow. So we bade farewell to this company, which was to carry on its consultations until deep into the night.

132 It is appreciably cooler at ʿAmd than it is further in Ḥaḍramaut, Terīm being the hottest place. The altitude of